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Chairperson: Mrs. Gittens-Joseph ..... (Trinidad and Tobago)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 105: Crime prevention and criminal justice (*continued*) (A/C.3/55/L.9)

1. **Ms. Borzi** (Italy), introducing the draft resolution entitled "Strengthening the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme, in particular its technical cooperation capacity", said that the following phrase had been omitted from the beginning of preambular paragraph 5 of the document: "Recognizing the need to maintain a balance in the technical cooperation capacity of the Centre for International Crime Prevention of the Office for Drug ...".

2. The following countries had expressed their wish to join in co-sponsoring the draft resolution: Bangladesh, Bulgaria, Egypt, Fiji, Georgia, Lesotho, Monaco, Norway, Panama, the Russian Federation, Turkey and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

3. The aim of the draft resolution was to improve the technical cooperation capacities of The Centre for International Crime Prevention by increasing the voluntary contributions from States. It included two new elements, namely, references to the Declaration adopted by the Tenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and the Treatment of Offenders held in Vienna in April 2000 and the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, which would be open for signature in Palermo in December 2000.

Agenda item 106: International drug control (*continued*) (A/C.3/55/L.10)

4. **Mr. Campuzano** (Mexico), introducing the draft resolution entitled "International drug control" on behalf of the sponsors, said that Armenia, Bangladesh, Botswana, Cameroon, Croatia, Grenada, Haiti, Honduras, Iceland, Israel, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Liberia, Malawi, Togo and Uzbekistan wished to be added to the list of sponsors.

5. The draft resolution consisted of four sections. The first reaffirmed the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and international law for countering the world drug problem. The second referred to the actions that the international community should take to apply the outcome of the twentieth special session and the Action Plan for the Implementation of the Declaration on the Guiding Principles of Drug Demand. The third set out cooperation measures within the United Nations system to combat the problem of drugs and reaffirmed the central role of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNIDCP) and the fourth referred to the United Nations International Drug Control Programme and the priority needs related to programming and technical assistance under the new strategy.

Agenda item 110: Promotion and protection of the rights of children (*continued*) (A/55/41 (Suppl. No. 41), A/55/201, A/55/297, A/55/442, A/55/162-S/2000/715, A/55/163-S/2000/712, A/55/467-S/2000/973)

6. **Mr. Chowdhury** (Bangladesh) said that, despite the nearly universal ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, translating its objectives into reality continued to pose a challenge. The 1990 World Summit for Children had established goals and Bangladesh had adopted a national plan of action for children for the period 1997 to 2002. The two Optional Protocols to the Convention adopted by the General Assembly in 2000 were of particular importance and should contribute greatly to protecting children affected by armed conflicts and also to the eradication of the sale and sexual exploitation of children.

7. Bangladesh greatly appreciated the important role that the United Nations agencies, particularly the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), continued to play in addressing the issue of children in armed conflict. Significant work was also being carried out by regional and sub-regional organizations in Africa, Central America and the Asia-Pacific regions and, during the Millennium Summit, his Prime Minister had called for the declaration of child-soldier-free zones in all parts of the world.

8. In the efforts to establish a culture of prevention, a culture of peace should be inculcated in every child through education, advocacy and practice in order to ensure that such a culture became deeply rooted in society.

9. The interim report of the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (A/55/297) highlighted some measures taken by non-

governmental organizations in Bangladesh to sensitize the police and other members of the community to women's and children's rights. The Government fully supported such work and had already incorporated human rights education into the basic training module for the police forces. Full commitment to child issues had been reiterated at the highest political level when the Prime Minister had declared her personal commitment and that of her Government to ensuring all Bangladeshi children a decent future with respect for their rights and dignity. Efforts to that end were matched by the Government's support for a regional convention against the trafficking in women and children, which had been endorsed by the Heads of State and Government of the South Asian countries.

10. Children would continue to suffer abuses and denial of their rights if poverty was not eliminated. Child labour went hand in hand with poverty and Bangladesh had established the year 2010 as a deadline for its eradication. However, demand by industrialized countries perpetuated the sexual exploitation of children, and control mechanisms were required to ensure the responsible use of the new information and communication technologies that had aggravated the problem.

11. **Mr. Kolby** (Norway) said that his Government continued to be deeply concerned about the situation of children affected by armed conflict. Norway had been among the first States to sign the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict and trusted that others would soon follow suit.

12. Efforts to combat child labour and child abuse were being supported with new standards and international legislation. Norway was preparing to ratify the ILO Convention 182 on the worst forms of child labour and encouraged universal ratification and implementation of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.

13. Norway had launched the so-called "Oslo-Challenge", which proposed a wide range of measures to implement and follow up on Article 17 of the Convention relating to children and the mass media. Combating poverty was also an essential part of Norway's overall efforts to implement the rights of the child. In 1999, the Government had submitted to Parliament a plan of action for human rights, which outlined a rights-based approach to development and to protecting the rights of the child.

14. Good health standards were crucial for children and Norway was making a substantial contribution to the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization. Another serious threat to children's health was the HIV/AIDS epidemic. The role of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in promoting the rights of the child in connection with HIV/AIDS and other issues was crucial and his delegation strongly supported her efforts to spearhead the integration of human rights and other children's rights into the United Nations system.

15. Although the ultimate responsibility for realizing the rights of the child lay with the State, there were also many non-governmental organizations working in the field and he hoped that they would work together with Governments and international organizations.

16. Lastly, although the Convention on the Rights of the Child had been ratified by almost all countries, his delegation was concerned at the large number of reservations and called on States to withdraw such reservations as soon as possible.

17. **Mr. Ahmad** (Malaysia), speaking on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), paid tribute to the efforts of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to promote the universal ratification and full implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. ASEAN had placed the promotion and protection of children at the forefront of cooperation in the field of economic and social development. In accordance with the Plan of Action for implementing the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children in the 1990s, ASEAN in 1993 had adopted its own Plan of Action for Children which provided a framework for promoting regional cooperation for the survival, protection and development of the ASEAN child and laid out strategies for each area of concern. Member countries had undertaken several joint actions in accordance with the Plan.

18. Although family structures varied from country to country and differences were respected, the shared rights and responsibilities of parents throughout the region should be reinforced. Economic development should focus on strengthening the family through the provision of basic social services such as primary health care and basic education. In the allocation of

scarce resources, priority should, moreover, be accorded to children. There should also be close national and international monitoring of child labour, not all forms of which were exploitative or abusive. Given that families in extreme poverty often depended on income supplied by their children, financial assistance to families represented one means of resolving the problem. The commendable efforts of the International Labour Organization to provide education programmes for working children should be extended to benefit more countries.

19. Every effort should be made to give children their due rights to education, health and the enjoyment of a normal childhood. ASEAN members deplored the involvement of children in armed conflict and were in favour of enhanced regional and international coordination on the issue. They also supported the efforts of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict.

20. Studies had confirmed the strong link between the promotion and protection of the rights of women and the well-being of children. Programmes to improve the education, employment and the decision-making power of women, and to eliminate discriminatory practices, would thus contribute also to the promotion and protection of the rights of children. ASEAN member countries had decided to establish a human resources development fund to implement programmes of direct benefit to children in the region. International support would be most welcome.

21. **Mr. N'Dry** (Côte d'Ivoire) said that his Government, concerned by the traffic in Malian children to be used as cheap labour on plantations in Côte d'Ivoire, had conducted high-level investigations at both the places of origin and the destination to identify the extent of the trafficking, and to determine what action could be taken against the traffickers and their accomplices and under what conditions the children could be repatriated and reintegrated. Close cooperation from the countries of the sub-region had been required, and Côte d'Ivoire was pleased to have received cooperation from the authorities of Mali who themselves were working assiduously to put an end to the trafficking. An agreement signed between the two countries provided for the identification of the children's places of origin by Mali and of their itinerary in Côte d'Ivoire, and for both countries to adopt regulations governing the movement of children outside their territories and establish a joint monitoring commission. Those initiatives were in keeping with article 11 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, with which Côte d'Ivoire was intent on complying.

22. A technical commission would soon be established in Côte d'Ivoire to implement the agreement and law enforcement officials had been made very aware of the need to stop the transborder trafficking in children; indeed, a bus transporting 34 children from a neighbouring country had already been intercepted. Côte d'Ivoire had also participated earlier in the year in a sub-regional consultation on strategies to combat trafficking in children to be exploited as labourers in West and Central Africa. His Government was confident that despite the complexity of the problem it could, with good will, be controlled.

23. **Mr. Barskiy** (Russian Federation) recalled that the Russian Federation had been among the first to ratify the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which served to guide its national policy on children. His Government attached high priority to the protection of children's rights in matters of international cooperation. Preparations were already under way in the Commonwealth of Independent States for the forthcoming special session on children; it was to be hoped that the special session would result in increased international support to countries in transition in the form of programmes to improve the situation of children.

24. The World Summit for Children had provided the impetus for the elaboration of comprehensive measures to promote the survival, protection and development of children, resulting in much tangible progress in recent years. The Russian Federation was currently considering ratification of the two optional protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Regrettably, however, the international community had yet to implement many of the outcomes of the Summit. Moreover, the exacerbation of certain problems — such as infant and maternal mortality, sexual exploitation and HIV/AIDS — was most alarming. Also weighing on the world's conscience was the predicament of children in armed conflict. In that connection his Government had welcomed Security Council resolution 1314 (2000) and noted that the International Conference on War-affected Children held recently in Winnipeg, Canada had proved most useful. It was important, also, to ensure that United Nations efforts in favour of children encompassed other issues, such as the death penalty for juveniles, availability of small

arms, the problems of migrant workers' children, paedophilia and its distribution over the Internet, as well as terrorism, a phenomenon which affected adults and children alike.

25. The political and economic future of the Russian Federation — including its full transition to a market economy — depended on its children. Their protection was thus an ongoing priority for his Government, as was the resolution of problems common to many other countries such as child homelessness, drug-addiction, the trafficking in and sexual exploitation of children, and increased juvenile crime and truancy rates. However difficult their individual circumstances, all Governments were obliged to take measures to ensure that children were afforded effective protection under national law, to improve the situation of children and to ensure that they were raised according to highest values of the human civilization they were to inherit.

26. **Ms. Hastaie** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that her Government had devoted particular attention to children and had designed a series of new rules and revised existing laws and regulations to better protect their social and civil rights. The general public considered that observing the rights of the child was part of their religious duty, and children enjoyed special legal status in the Civil Code and the Constitution.

27. Iran had submitted its initial report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child in 1997 and the Committee acknowledged that, despite some shortcomings in terms of regulations and mechanisms, the situation of children in Iran had improved over the last decade, in accordance with the targets set at the World Summit for Children. Iran's first periodic report to the Committee would be submitted in 2001.

28. Despite the relevant provisions in the Convention on the Rights of the Child and many other international conventions and declarations, separate internationally agreed documents were needed to deal specifically with children in armed conflicts and the sexual exploitation of children. Iran therefore welcomed the adoption of the two Optional Protocols that should pave the way to increased cooperation among all Governments and also with civil society to end the exploitation and miseries of children throughout the world.

29. **Mr. Baali** (Algeria) said that the previous decade had been characterized by significant progress in respect of the promotion and protection of the rights of the child, culminating in the adoption of ILO Convention No. 182 on the worst forms of child labour and of the two Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Despite increased awareness of children's rights, millions of children in the South continued, however, to be exposed to extreme poverty, conflict, disease and neglect. The international community must take urgent measures to end their suffering. The figures spoke for themselves: 13 million children had lost one or both parents to HIV/AIDS; in developing countries, 11 million five-year-olds continued to die from preventable diseases and almost a third of those under the age of five were malnourished; 150 million children did not complete primary education; between 130 and 250 million children were engaged in child labour; and two million children were killed and a further six million injured in armed conflict. The international community must ensure that it honoured existing commitments, including those undertaken at the Millennium Summit, and additional resources must be mobilized to that end.

30. The predicament of African children was most alarming of all. The indebtedness, unemployment and pandemics ravaging the continent only exacerbated the situation of children already suffering from malnutrition, illiteracy, poverty and armed conflict. Moreover, up to 20 million African children were subjected to child labour. Although the latter did not constitute a significant problem in Algeria, his Government had recently decided to ratify the ILO Convention on the worst forms of child labour. Children's rights were afforded effective protection under national law, and the Constitution provided further guarantees, upholding children's right to life and stipulating that primary education be compulsory and freely available to all. A national plan of action for children had been elaborated, and the necessary machinery established to monitor the protection of the rights of both mother and child. It was the duty of the international community of adults to ensure the welfare of every child in the new millennium; the special session would afford the opportunity to realize that achievable goal.

31. **Mr. Al-Ojaili** (Oman) said that Oman had signed the Convention on the Rights of the Child as a sign of its determination to give new impetus to endeavours to improve the situation of children in the country.

32. His Government shared the concern of the international community with regard to the child, and would honour its undertakings pursuant to the relevant agreements and conventions. It had made significant progress in areas relating to children, and had seen a significant decrease in infant mortality rates and in the number of children under five years of age suffering from malnutrition. The UNICEF report on *The State of the World's Children* had recognized Oman's achievements, and had specifically commended the basic health services which had made such a contribution to the reduction in child mortality rates.

33. Such international recognition only increased Oman's determination to build on its achievements and to continue to give priority to children in social development policy.

34. **Ms. Molaroni** (San Marino) said that she was compelled to speak out for the two million children who had been killed in the past 10 years in conflicts, the one million orphans, the six million children seriously injured or permanently disabled, the 20 million displaced children, the 300,000 child soldiers and the 10 million or more children left with deep trauma.

35. In commemoration of the recent tenth anniversary of the entry into force of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, San Marino had issued a series of four stamps, each representing one of the fundamental principles of the Convention, which, together with a publication on the Convention, would be widely distributed; the proceeds would be donated to UNICEF. San Marino had been the first to sign the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict and the second to sign the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and pornography. It also welcomed the adoption of Security Council resolution 1261 (1999), a milestone in dealing with the situation of children in armed conflicts.

36. San Marino had never had an army, and found it inconceivable that children should be recruited to fight. Over the years, it had contributed to many projects for the protection of children affected by war, and had sponsored a landmine awareness programme for children. It continued to support all initiatives taken by the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict. It welcomed the outcome of the recent Winnipeg International Conference on War-Affected Children.

37. At a recent UNICEF World Education Forum it had been emphasized that education should be as available to boys as to girls, for knowledge was power and gave children control over their future. Currently 130 million children worldwide, 60 per cent of them girls, did not have access to education for a variety of reasons. Governments should bring political will and resources to bear on eliminating gender differences, prejudice and discrimination and should make a commitment to educate girls in conflict and post-conflict situations. It was hardly imaginable that 250 million children between the ages of 5 and 14 worked in developing countries, 50 to 60 million of them in dangerous tasks. Families all over the world should have the possibility of sending their children to school and letting them enjoy their childhood.

38. There was also the situation of the nearly 10,000 children infected by HIV/AIDS. All possible support should be given to contain the infection and make free treatment available to all.

39. Energies must be directed towards ensuring respect for the legal instruments in force. San Marino was looking forward to participating in the special session of the General Assembly on children to be held in 2001 and hoped that every Government would be able to report concrete progress in raising life expectancy, reducing disease, increasing access to education, improving nourishment and generally protecting children so that they could contribute to the social life of their communities.

40. **Ms. Steiner** (Israel) observed that there had been a shift in the general perception — which was also the guiding principle throughout the Convention on the Rights of the Child — that decisions in matters relating to children were to be determined by others acting for their perceived good. During the past two decades, children had come to be viewed increasingly as citizens with unique rights, separate from and independent of their parents. Those divergent views had created tension in many countries, including Israel, and had given rise to different legislative directions. In Israel, its Basic Law guaranteed constitutional protection to the rights of the child and there had been a steady rise in the number of judicial decisions reflecting the rationale underlying the Convention but also increasingly taking account of the child's perspective

and his or her right to human dignity, and setting harsher penalties for unlawful treatment of children.

41. Her Government had undertaken a comprehensive reform in the field: in 1997, a committee had been appointed to recommend revision of existing legislation in the light of the Convention; in addition, commissions on the status of the child had recently been established in every municipality, with inclusion of child representatives. Respect for human dignity had been made the central theme in the country's school curriculum. An Ombudsman had been appointed within the National Council for the Child to protect and promote children's rights and administer youth programmes, and the Office had been receiving 8,000 calls annually. Moreover, Israel had put the subject of children on its international cooperation agenda, having developed a number of unique programmes, especially in the early childhood domain, that could be highly relevant to other countries; and its volunteers had worked with UNICEF on its landmine-awareness project.

42. The battle against child abuse had not yet been won, for anachronistic social and traditional values persisted in many societies, including Israel. The practice of beating children remained widespread, jeopardizing their personal development and violating their basic human dignity, and all States and non-governmental organizations should make an unequivocal denunciation of all forms of corporal punishment of children.

43. **Monsignor Chullikatt** (Observer for the Holy See) welcomed the recent adoption of two Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Holy See had now signed those two important additions to the Convention that reflected the strong international moral consensus on the issues involved.

44. Unacceptable violations of the rights of children during situations of armed conflict had nevertheless continued over the past decade. The Holy See supported the recommendations made in the report of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict (A/55/163-S/2000/712). The family was certainly the most effective unit for meeting the needs and protecting the rights of children during periods of armed conflict. Unfortunately, it was also true that evil ambitions had led to the deliberate targeting of communities and families during conflicts as a means of destabilization, with the result that children were often separated from their families and became vulnerable to forced recruitment as child soldiers or sexual slaves.

45. A strong effort had to be made to continue working on the development of mutually acceptable principles for the provision of assistance to children and all other internally displaced persons. More must also be done to assist refugee populations, half of which were children. Particularly important was the right of refugee children to basic education, for when war threatened, education was a critical tool for prevention, protection and reconciliation.

46. Governments and the producers of small arms had a moral responsibility to curb the illicit flow of small arms. Those were the weapons that ended up in the hands of child soldiers or were used against them. In order to keep them from finding their way to armed conflicts through illicit channels, two possible solutions would be to devise a reliable marking system indicating the origin of each weapon, and to collect and destroy, or store under international supervision any illicit and excess weapons at the end of the conflicts. Governments should, moreover, act to eliminate the economic incentives that prompted trade in gold, diamonds, timber or hard currency in exchange for arms.

47. Both during and after conflicts, the use of anti-personnel landmines continued indiscriminately to kill or maim an estimated 10,000 innocent children every year. Further landmine-awareness campaigns and rehabilitation services for the victims of landmines were therefore essential.

48. The family, again, offered the strongest protection for children against sexual abuse and exploitation, a point made also by the Special Rapporteur on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography in her report (A/55/297). The innocent victims of abuse must receive appropriate care. UNICEF and other agencies should be commended for their public-awareness campaigns to combat trafficking in children or their commercial sexual exploitation. However, strong laws were also needed to remove economic incentives for the perpetrators; and the social, economic and moral root causes of trafficking had to be addressed.

49. **Mr. Alenezi** (Kuwait) said that the suffering endured by children in many parts of the world as a result of poverty, adverse social and economic

conditions, armed conflict and exploitation was of the greatest concern. Child protection was an inseparable part of the United Nations responsibility to maintain international peace and security.

50. The Constitution of Kuwait recognized the family as the basis of society and its laws protected the mother and child. Kuwait had signed the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1990 and ratified it in 1991, since which time all the relevant Kuwaiti institutions celebrated 1 October as the Day of the Arab Child. Kuwait was proud to have placed above all other Arab countries for the second year running in terms of its Human Development Index ranking.

51. Kuwait provided many services and implemented many programmes related to children, including providing free health services and free education from pre-school to university level. It had established a number of nurseries and mother and child-related projects and provided comprehensive ante- and post-natal health services. The families of children with special needs were given material and moral support.

52. As part of the child-related strategy, it had been decided to establish a supreme council for the child and the family, composed of representatives from several ministries and other government bodies and five specially appointed experts. Recommendations put forward by the council would be binding upon the relevant ministries.

53. It was time for the international community to renew its commitment to implementation of the provisions of child-related international legal agreements if children and mankind as a whole were to be protected and guaranteed a secure future. He therefore looked forward to the special session of the General Assembly for follow-up to the World Summit for Children in 2001.

54. **Mr. Boisson** (Monaco) said that the early entry into force of the two Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, both of which Monaco had signed, should provide greater legal protection for children and adolescents subjected to armed conflicts or to sexual abuse or exploitation. The Special Rapporteur on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography had in her valuable report in document A/55/297 confirmed the preponderant role of the State and the family in protecting children from such revolting abuse. The family being one of the best stabilizing elements in the lives of children, violence within the family, together with poverty and a lack of education, acted as a catalyst for the exploitation of children, who often fell prey because they were seeking affection and economic security that they did not find in the home.

55. A World Health Organization (WHO) report on violence and health that was soon to be issued would no doubt help the Special Rapporteur to reach further conclusions in the matter. The media were particularly well placed to work on behalf of children by denouncing sexual tourism and exposing the perverse figures behind it. A forthcoming study on the role of the private sector, as well as the decisions taken at the 1999 meeting of the World Economic Forum, could make it possible to step up the pressure on those who continued investing in countries which disregarded human rights and the rights of children. Stricter laws and adequate judicial procedures were also indispensable tools in combating trafficking in children, the sexual exploitation of children and child labour.

56. Any progress made needed encouragement, especially in countries in difficult economic straits. The international community was aware that increased development aid was a necessity if all countries were to have adequate social structures.

57. The Agenda for War-Affected Children adopted at the recent Winnipeg Conference and its further annual evaluations would be a useful tool. Children must not become targets during wars, and urgent humanitarian assistance must be made available to them. There again, the media and the private sector must take on a greater role by putting pressure on those who waged wars. The commitment of the Security Council was, of course, a major factor. Coordination and collaboration on the ground were basic in protecting children in wartime.

58. The rapid spread of HIV/AIDS in areas of conflict and the loss of the security offered by the family and the school were the major threats to children. The specific needs and expectations of adolescents, including their involvement in peace processes and in activities on their behalf should also be seriously taken into account. The devastating consequences of the sale of small arms, which had an impact on children, also needed further study.

The meeting rose at 5.10 p.m.